REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for finding allowable subject matter in claims 3 and 4. Applicant hereby requests that the application be amended as above described. More specifically, claims 1 to 4 have been amended to correct informalities, and new claims 6 to 20 have been added to the application. Claims 1 to 20 remain in this application.

Claim informalities

The Examiner objected to claims 3 and 4 for the omission of articles preceding specific terms and expressions recited therein. In response, claim 3 has been amended to replace the expression "storing in register" with --storing in a register--. Claim 4 has been amended to replace the expressions "stored in register", "forwarded from a sub-block in previous column", and "forward to a sub-block in next" with --stored in the register--, --forwarded from a sub-block in a previous column--, and --forward to a sub-block in a next--,. respectively. Accordingly, it is believed that the Examiners objections to claims 3 and 4 are overcome.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) in view of U.S. Patent Application publication number US 2004/0128440 (Regev). Applicant points out that the present application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 60/429,559 filed on Nov-29-2002, while Regev has a later filing date of Dec-30-2002. Therefore, Applicant submits that Regev is not a citable reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as it does not have a filing date prior to the Nov-29-2002 filing date. Withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection to claims 1 and 2 is thereby requested.

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) in view of U.S. Patent number 6,700,809 (Ng). The Examiner states that Ng discloses a method for inserting priority data in a CAM having a plurality of data array blocks. Applicant respectfully disagrees, and submits that Ng does not disclose a CAM organized into data array blocks.

Claim 5 is directed to a method for inserting data in a CAM having data array blocks. The steps include in part, providing a priority value register associated with each block,

determining a free block, writing the data to the free block and updating the priority value registers which are associated with each block. As described in paragraph [0034] of the description and shown in Figure 2 of the present application, the CAM array is arranged in blocks of 1024 words, where each word can be a 72-bit entry. Hence the present application makes a clear distinction between a block of entries and an entry.

In contrast, the CAM of Ng is not organized into blocks. Ng discloses a CAM having a simple memory 133 containing multiple entries, where each entry includes a priority value field (PRI) to provide a corresponding priority level. As described by Ng, the PRI is associated with each entry 132 for prioritizing the entry relative to the other entries. Therefore, the PRI cannot be associated with a block of entries since the Ng CAM array is not organized into blocks of entries. Ng does not imply or infer that his CAM array can have priority value registers associated with blocks, especially since entry 132 does not have a block priority field, and Figure 3 does not show any element that could be used as a priority value register. Therefore, Applicant submits that Ng does not anticipate claim 5, since Ng does not teach or disclose the method steps of claim 5 that involve blocks. Withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) is respectfully requested.

Further claim amendments

Applicant takes the opportunity to correct informalities in the claims, in order to clarify the invention.

In claim 1, the term --corresponding-- has been inserted before the expression "data array block", the expression --of the plurality of-- has been inserted before the expression "PE block", the expression --the user defined-- has been inserted after the expression "means for evaluating", and the expression "a PE block having the highest priority data entry" has been replaced with the expression --one PE block having the highest priority data entry--.

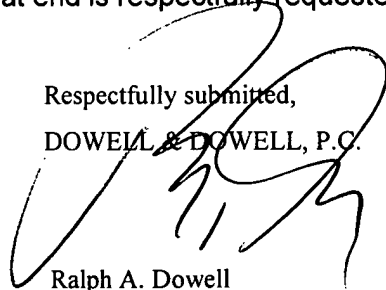In claim 2, the indefinite article "A" in the preamble has been replaced with definite article --The--.

In claim 5, the term --free-- has been inserted between "said" and "block".

New claims

Applicant takes the opportunity to add new dependent claims 6-20 to the application. New claims 6 to 14 depend from claim 3, and recite additional method steps directed to the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 2 of the application. New claims 15 to 20 depend from claim 1, and recite additional features of the means for evaluating priority values. No new matter is being added.

Therefore, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and favorable action to that end is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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3/20/2006

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